THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • SATURDAY • AUGUST 23, 2025 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 24 • LATE CITY EDITION

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TIKTOK WEB GOES LIVE FOR SOME IN INDIA, APP STILL OFF LIMITS

For the first time since its 2020 ban, TikTok's official website is accessible to some users in India, fueling speculation about its return

PARENT COMPANY MUM ON APP'S INDIA LAUNCH

Despite the website's partial functionality, TikTok app remains absent from Google Play Store and Apple App Store in India. Neither ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, nor the Centre gave clarity on whether the app would be relaunched locally. TikTok was among 59 Chinese apps banned in June 2020 by the government citing national security | **P15**

SIGNS OF WARMING TIES WITH CHINA

- The website's reappearance aligns with warming diplomatic ties between India and China in the backdrop of recent meetings between PM Narendra Modi and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi
- Posts on X reflected mixed experiences, with some users accessing the website without a VPN, while others saying it's still inaccessible

2 crore

INDIANS WERE USING TIKTOK AT THE TIME OF INDIA BANNING IT IN 2020

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

SC opens online SIR claim window

Allows excluded voters to upload forms along with Aadhaar copy or one of 11 documents

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY
@ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Friday directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to allow excluded voters to submit their claims online, adding it was not mandatory to make physical submissions in the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise of electoral roll in poll-bound Bihar.

It also allowed the excluded voters to submit their Aadhaar card copy or one of the 11 documents the poll body had sought during the SIR exercise.

The order came after the ECI reported compliance of the court's earlier directive to publish online the names of the 65 lakh voters proposed to be dropped from the Bihar draft roll, during the SIR drive.

The ECI said around 85,000 excluded voters had submitted their claim forms, adding over 2 lakh new voters had sought to register themselves in the electoral rolls in the state.

A two-judge bench comprising justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi expressed surprise over political parties not coming forward to file objections related to the excluded voters. They directed the chief electoral officer of Bihar to implead them in the court proceedings. "All 12 political parties shall issue specific directions to party workers to assist voters in filing claim forms," the court said. "They also need to be present in court and file status reports," the bench added.

"Our understanding is that if each booth level agents (BLA) of the political parties verifies at least 10 names of the 65 lakh excluded voters, then in a single day the 1.60 lakh BLAs who have been registered till now, will be able to verify 16 lakh voters. In 4-5 days we can verify the entire 65 lakh voters who have been excluded from the draft roll," Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the ECI, said.

The court was also surprised that of the 1.68 lakh booth level agents (BLAs) of political parties, so far only two objections have been filed on voter deletion. But lawyer Fauzia Shakil, appearing for RJD MP Manoj Jha, said BLAs were not given acknowledgement receipts when they went to submit claim forms physically.

Senior advocate Prashant Bhushan submitted that not all those excluded may be able to file their claims as some go out of the state from time to time for work. Though Aadhaar is permitted, officials seek additional proof from the 11 documents listed earlier. The bench said the claim forms can be submitted with either Aadhaar or matric certificate.

BIHAR PARTIES IMPLEADED

THE BENCH PULLED UP POLITICAL PARTIES FOR THEIR INACTION IN HELPING EXCLUDED VOTERS GET THEMSELVES ENROLLED

1. "Voters are individually coming forward. But what are the political parties in Bihar doing?" the bench asked
2. Give the ECI a 15-day window to show there was no exclusion, says senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi
3. "Give us some time, we will ensure that not one voter will fall through the cracks," Dwivedi said
4. Booth level officers told to acknowledge receipt of claim form. But that shall not mean the form is complete

STRAYS GET A LIFELINE

SC: RELEASE STRAY DOGS BUT ONLY AFTER STERILISATION

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

IN a significant ruling, the Supreme Court on Friday modified its August 11 order, directing that stray dogs be released back to their original locations after sterilisation and immunisation, except those infected with rabies or displaying aggressive behaviour.

A three-judge bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and NV Anjaria, which had reserved its order on August 14, prohibited feeding stray dogs in public places, stating that unregulated feeding causes public nuisance. It also warned that appropriate action would be taken against violators.

Civic bodies to file report

The SC directed municipal authorities to file reports of resources like dog pounds, veterinarians, dog catching personnel

Expanding the case's scope, the Supreme Court said its ruling on Friday applies to all states and Union Territories, and further directed animal husbandry departments and municipal authorities to comply.

The bench then mandated the creation of a helpline by each municipal body to report violations and ruled that no individual or organisation can hinder officials in performing their duties.

The bench said the August 11 order, passed by a two-judge bench calling for permanent relocation of strays from streets to shelters in 8 weeks, should be kept in abeyance for the time being. Before any direction for impounding entire stray dog population was given, the court said it was necessary to examine existing infrastructure and human resources available with municipal bodies.

ED raids houses of Congress MLA, brothers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chitradurga, Bengaluru, Hubballi

THE Enforcement Directorate officials on Friday raided the residences of Chitradurga Congress MLA KC Veerendra (Puppy) and his brothers, KC Nagaraj and KC Thippeswamy. Veerendra runs a casino business.

The ED team began the raids at his residences around 5:30 am and continued them until late in the evening, sources said. Raids were also conducted at their residences in Bengaluru and Goa, where they have a casino business, sources said.

Police blocked the road on Kings Street in Challakere and ensured that the MLA's supporters did not reach his house during the raids. Veerendra and Thippeswamy were not at the house when the ED officials were conducting search operations, sources said. In Bengaluru, ED sleuths carried out a search and seizure operation at the residence of Congress leader Kusuma Hanumantarayappa's brother in Nagarbhavi. This comes after the agency suspected that Kusuma's brother, Anil Gowda, had links with Veerendra. Kusuma had contested the assembly election against former minister and BJP MLA Muniratna from Rajarajeshwari Nagar and was defeated. **P7**

Ministers can't give orders from jail: PM

KAUSHIK PRADHAN & RAMASHANKAR @ Kolkata / Patna

TAINTED ministers running government from jail is an insult to the Constitution, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday.

Making his first comments on the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, which seeks to bar arrested PM, CM, and ministers from holding office, Modi said: "An anti-corruption bill has been brought in the Lok Sabha this time. In our country, if even a small government employee has to be taken into police custody, if bail is not granted within 50 hours, his job will be lost. Even if a small worker goes to jail for two days, his life is over. But there is no such law for the Chief Minister or Prime Minister if they go to jail."

In an apparent dig at former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, Modi said, "Many CMs, even after going to jail, have been running the government from there. This is an insult to the Constitution. We will not allow this."

Addressing a public rally organised in Kolkata, he alleged the opposition parties are against the bill because they support the corrupt.

Targeting the Trinamool Congress, Modi said, "Two TMC ministers, even after going to jail on corruption charges, were not willing to give up their posts." He was referring to former state education minister Partha Chatterjee, arrested in connection with the teachers' recruitment scam, and Jyoti Priya Mallick, arrested in ration scam.

PM Narendra Modi at a public meeting in Gayaji. Bihar Governor Arif Mohammad Khan (in white) looks on | PTI

Earlier in the day, while addressing a public meeting at Gayaji in Bihar after laying the foundation stone of development projects worth ₹12,000 crore, he said: "We saw how files were being signed from jail and how government orders were given from jail. If leaders have such an attitude, how can we fight corruption?"

Speaking in the two poll-bound states, Modi also flagged the threat of demographic changes due to 'infiltration'.

"Trinamool and some political parties are supporting them (infiltrators) for power and votes. In some places, they are also taking their help. West Bengal is a border state. The way infiltration is increasing, it is becoming a social problem," he said, launching a sharp attack on the TMC.

Mega projects launched

PM on Friday inaugurated projects in the two poll-bound states of Bihar and West Bengal. In Bihar, he inaugurated development projects worth ₹12,000 crore. He also launched multiple development projects worth over ₹5,200 crore in Bengal

EXPRESS READ

SL ex-prez Wickremesinghe arrested

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's former president Ranil Wickremesinghe was arrested on Friday for allegedly misusing state funds during his tenure, becoming the first former head of state in the island nation to be taken into custody | **P14**

Authorities can take any action against bike taxi aggregators: HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Friday orally told the advocate general (AG) that authorities can take any action as per law against aggregators for resuming bike taxi services after he complained that the services have been resumed though the court had not given them such liberty. But the authorities should not harass individual bike taxi owners or riders, it cautioned.

A division bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Joshi clarified orally after AG K Shashikiran Shetty complained that Uber, Ola and Rapido have restarted their bike taxis, though the court did not give such an order while hearing the matter on August 20.

The court said that on August 20, it had only asked the AG to instruct the authorities not to take any precipitative action against individual bike taxi owners or riders.

The counsel for the Bike Taxi Welfare Association pointed out that transport department authorities were seizing individual bike taxis and taking action against the drivers despite the court's clear instructions that no coercive action should be taken against them. **P4**

India Kremlin's 'laundromat': Trump's aide

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

THE additional tariffs to punish India for purchasing Russian oil will kick in as scheduled on August 27, according to US President Donald Trump's trade adviser Peter Navarro. "I see that taking place," he said while speaking to reporters outside the White House on Thursday.

TARIFF TRACKER

Launching a blistering attack on India, Navarro claimed New Delhi doesn't need Russian oil for its domestic consumption but it is importing cheap crude for refining and exporting the refined product at a premium price.

The comments come amid escalating trade tensions between India and US. Since the 2022 Ukraine conflict, India has increased its purchases of discounted Russian crude and has also been refining it for export purpose. India maintains it acted under US advice to stabilise global oil prices that shot up due to the Russia-Ukrain war.

In his sharpest ever attack on India, Navarro alleged India has been acting like a "laundromat for the Kremlin" by continuing its trade with Russia.

"Prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, India bought no Russian oil...It was like almost 1% of their need. The percentage has now gone up to 35%...It's a refining profit-sharing scheme. It's a laundromat for the Kremlin. That's the reality of that," he said.

On its part, India cited both economic necessity and US encouragement to stabilise the global energy market.

They (India) don't need the oil. It's a refining profit-sharing scheme. It's a laundromat for the Kremlin

Trump's trade adviser Peter Navarro

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